# Trial by Hellfire 1.02

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## Prologue:

Aron `Johnson´ Cabrera smirked while still lying on the double bed of the hotel room. He was a lot, but not an inexperienced dolt. The woman who, by now, had gone to the bathroom had played it well. Celebrating the contractual success does happen now and then, after all. Still, the streets were where the Shadowrunners roamed, and the truth in the warning ALWAYS comes first, Chummers:

`When it seems too good to be true, then it is!´

The other side of his most recent deal considered him the weak link in the chain, so they lured him away from witnesses and prepared to force him into compliance. Admittedly, his bio-cybernetic cyberware made many consider him a sissy and a coward, yet that minimalism preserved something far more valuable: His quintessence, for Aron `Johnson´ Cabrera belonged to the Awakened, the magic folks.

On the big screens and by that data pin inserted into the brains, people would expect incantations and frantic gesturing, as the enemy strike teams were on the corridor already, and the prostitute turned assassin had picked up a silenced pistol hidden in the toilet's water tank, a classic.

Aron was dressed again, as not even armored underwear would be enough during modern shootouts. The clock struck `Let's dance!´.

Before the woman could open the door, she went down with two headshots fired from the Colt Witch-Hunter in Aron's right hand. The Colt Manhunter in his left hand aimed at the main door that had just been turned into a hail of wooden shrapnel, for the strike teams also came in.

The first two mercenaries froze, literally. That ice elemental made the closest two further mercenaries backpedal and scream: Mage!

Too late, the second elemental summoned by Aron went on a killing spree, and that went messy, as the air elemental dragged the wooden shrapnel and whatever gas grenades the mercenaries had intended to throw into the room straight back through them. Killing floor. Skulls cracked, as the air elemental, unable to perceive the pain of mammals, happily smacked the perceived obstacles around.

Aron inserted his platinum credstick into the com of the hotel: `Room service? Please, send a cleaning crew; somebody has made a mess here. Thanks!´

Cabrera would have loved to get back into a hideout first, but as a Johnson, he was expected to have his team's back. And so, he did his job.

**The story begins:**

On the left flank, Jake Anderson, the stereotypical Ex-Army Street-Samurai, jogged forward. His Truckle & Brock assault rifle was ready in his arms. The heat was unbearable. Facial mask and protective gear are their only chance of survival.

In the middle of Flash “Consolation” Pinewood, the Elven Pant-Creamer, ahem, Decker, of the group, and the Ex-Corporate Mage Viola Styles had their Ruger Thunderbolt automatic pistols ready while they advanced in a crouched stance.

The right flank was protected only by Fiona Montgomery, the stereotypical Ex-Army Rigger, who had her Mutsuhito assault shotgun prepared. Being a technical prodigy, her gear was the best-modified and lightest.

A Shadowrun in the Shadows of Saxony; that’s in Germany, Chummers. “Somewhere over there in Europe?” Yeah.

Anderson's team had taken the Run from a dying Shaman whom they found surrounded by the corpses of his own team of runners. It was the voice of duty calling him. Duty was his God and God was his Duty.

Retired or not, with just 28 years, Anderson lived for duty to be served. The Forces of Corruption had gone too far. Desecrating an ancient army base of the once-known USA. Standard Infiltration: get in, neutralize the cult-leader, and get out. In theory, it always sounded much too easy.

To clear their route of withdrawal, they had already taken out around one hundred and eighty mutants. Citizens horribly twisted by the Cult's Wicked Master.

Driven into an insane and violent frenzy, they could not be saved. “servae malum non est semper fidelis”, or in better words and a complete sentence: “The servants of Evil embody no honor and no loyalty.”

Only soldiers could really understand what reliability meant on the battlefield, and for morale. It's one thing to claim that no man is left behind; it is quite another to risk one's own life to ensure that it becomes true. Anderson and Montgomery had survived through two corporate wars and then decided to start their own mercenary agency.

The team advanced with the dawning realization that their target was not intending to run or hide at all. It was too calm for such a subterranean mission. Yet the cavern was close to the ritual place, certainly found properly by the Spy-Satellite, which had cost them so many Nuyen.

The naked form of their target came into sight. Nearly enriched by a pseudo-choreography of bloodshed, as his team neutralized the remaining mutants in less than ten seconds. Anderson looked around, ensuring that Viola Styles had followed his command. She had. The Mage was slowing her advance and did not take her eyes off the fiendish master.

“Deadlocked in Astral Crap.” Would be the way Flash tended to describe it, whenever under the strain of a mission. The Elf was used to it and knew how to protect and warn Viola on demand. His team was not green, and it showed time and time again.

The Master, obviously to indulge vulgar details unmentioned, found the occurrences he witnessed sexually exciting and stimulating. It showed, as only a Saxon High-Master shows it. Something was odd.

Even for an insane, perverted cultist, he was too calm and reassured. Anderson aimed and unleashed a burst of three bullets. The Saxon High-master was hit. Though he did not react like a mortal is supposed to react. Anderson swapped his magazine even though he lost half a second staring in disbelief.

He was too far away to see it in time. Viola's outcry was what saved him from a lethal, hot surprise. “Take Cover!”

Anderson was in a diagonal roll before he even knew why. Flash screamed in pain, and Viola, a silent Mage she tended to be, was shouting like an insane housewife. When Anderson could see again, he saw the middle crouched behind a magical barrier, which was assaulted by some kind of fiery substance.

At that moment, Fiona had come into range for her less long-ranged shotgun. Anderson heard her shoot. Then the earth around him exploded in micro-detonations. The blood of the fiend was like a splash of target-seeking napalm drops!

As tough as demons can be, the one truism about Riggers is that they are the fastest and best with any imaginable technology on the planet. The Saxon High-master screeched in agony when he received his second hit.

“Each ball blessed by the mourning relatives of your former victims!” Montgomery proclaimed precisely after having checked that the 'superstition gauge' had really hurt the fiend.

The third trick of the Saxon High-master worked in one instance. Psionic Overwhelm. The team was groggy, and for just one second, they really were forced to wish that they could become the next sex-slaves of the Fiend. A nauseating violation of the mind!

The Saxon's focus was shattered when the Microbots of Flash had followed their scripts, though. Paranoid, as only an Elven Pant-Creamer, ahem, Decker, could be, the weird genius had guaranteed security measures, as his most needed tool of the trade, his Fetich Cyberdeck, worked on as a scanner checking the heartbeats and brain-waves of each team member. The moment one of those sank below standard, its signal had activated the bots just as Flash had programmed it to do.

The Fiend was hit by silvery needles that were bathed in holy water. While not more powerful than any decent needle-gun on the market, Flechette, still being a famous arms-producer, the small weapons of the microbots were designed as emergency help, and had quite some ammo to send into the world.

Like any true soldiers, Anderson and Montgomery were charging. The mission is over, when the mission is over - never before that. Knocker ammunition from Anderson kept the fiend busy being dumbstruck and gave Fiona all the time she needed to close in for a holy headshot of sorts. The Fiend was undone before his last unholy blood lost the race against a backpedaling, militarily cyber-enhanced Rigger! When Fiona raised her helicopter into the air, the alertness was finally back at yellow.

It was one of those weird runs which nobody would care to remember for long...

End of Story

## Unveiled secrets: The author - narrator - acting triangle

IF the old stories would have scored fan-funding, then the mandatory work of rewriting Shadowrun into an alternative, legally free setting would have already been done.

From monetizing that, the audio drama and the short film would have been made. Always depending on how much incoming money allows what quality-degree of production.

Instead, I rejoice, as most of you also age-away in much more poverty than the retards you made rich. Too honest? My apologies.